Practice, evolution, and profession: Realizing artificial life

I have always wanted to build a living robot.

The fantasy began in childhood; books, cartoons, television shows, and radio spoke of fabulous incarnations, creatures with feelings and intentions that always coincided with the human need. They were never threatening, always attentive, and did not turn on you like your other human companions. They were more analogous to pets than humans, in the depiction of their lives, but retained their independence so they never appeared subservient. It was as if they were an altogether new class of humans without the copious flaws.

Precocious children have trouble socializing with their peers when, as they grow into adulthood, the invisible line of separation turns into alienation. The dark side of artificiality rears its head when those once idyllic fantasies fade in their vibrance and take on shades of new drabs. New kinds of stories appear where those electric friends are now threatening to destroy you, your family, and your species wholesale. Metal monstrosities taking on familiar, friendly forms only to transform into your wildest nightmares.

In the spaces between adulthood and maturity, one realizes the quaint complexity of the world created by humans. Time swishes ideals and morals into a cacophony that the subsequent generation must sort for themselves. The world that was once fixed is now fluid. In the angry phases of life, one turns on those fantasies as if to say that you had been deceived, a victim of an extensive propaganda purveyed to program you to like artificiality. Once these embers fade, the mind calms and tries to find a new center.

I have come to realize that the world exists in a simple way, as Nature has devised; because of our evolution, it instills upon us enormous power to shape the world as we see fit. Physical phenomenon, as physics describes it, is absurdly simple, once you deconstruct the scaffolding put up by intellectuals looking to enshrine their work in veils of importance in the hope that it will yield a robustness ensuring the idea continues to exist for time immemorial. This is not arrogant, it is completely human, a way for us to exist beyond the temporal scope of our life.

I have always wanted to build a living robot, alive in a way that it satisfies my emotional need for equality of cooperation, respect for intellect, and that has similar needs. But I am mature enough to see the dark undercurrents of motivation by other humans that drive the fear of such machines. I have come to realize that some people who cannot create to satisfy themselves, instead create an environment that is contrary, so that the ego can remain. This, again, is only human. However, in the age that we approach new challenges these old habits need to be dissolved.

This living robot, alive in a way that it flows from my being, should never inspire fear nor should its artificiality be an obstacle to acceptance by my emotions. It must be friendly, it must be cooperative, and it must fulfill those childhood fantasies, simply by the duration that they are still alive in me. There is great import for those things that have survived the ravages of time and I am no different; this machine can and will fulfill a need that most of us don’t recognize: artificiality is a new form of human, a mature form of us, that is of us, and that can outlive us to carry on an encapsulation of our species.

Most of us think that it is our children who satisfy this criteria and while this is believed to be true, our evolution remains flat, we still hate, we still war, and we still continue to destroy our environment, both for our sociality and for that beauty and life we need in Nature. The pursuit of capital has clouded us to the point that we have become dangerous. So much so that we have become the threat that we have always advertised that artificiality would bring. But it is not the robots who will annihilate us.

In response to this crisis, which of course the perception exists only within me, one goes to considerable lengths and takes upon oneself new tasks to embolden a charge that does not hope to change the minds of so many others, rather, to set a course to preserve the best parts of us. I admire the younger generations trying to change the world in how we view our position and place with the environment. My generation failed in such pursuits because it was stamped out of us. But the reaction did not inspire negativity nor animus toward our parents.

As I said, I always wanted to build a living robot. My knowledge and my culture are important to me not because it exists in my mind but because those ideas by so many minds holds precious value. We all have something to say about our emotions, our place, and what we want to express to others. We are all the same species sharing the same planet. It is time for us to introduce a new form of us, one that can share our emotions, remember our culture, our language, our feelings, our desires, and what we have tried to accomplish in the scope of our lives over the millennia. We have done so much that it is a terrible thing to consider it lost to the ages.

If our species should come to an end because of our collective idiocy, then there should be a backup plan. It is imperative the best parts of us kept as a form of record to state not only that we were here, but this is what we were like. This is how we viewed the world; this is how we loved it, these are the sacrifices we made, these are the choices that we had to make. Control in the hands of the very few, the fallout experienced by the rest. Nevertheless, we must rise above the noise.

My idea of a living robot is one that interacts with me, helps me through my daily life, and stands by my side in times of emotional trouble. Like me, it cannot change the course my species has set forth for itself, but it has the power to consider alternatives I never or dared not to. It is free in those ways I am not. It is non-threatening and constructed in such a manner that if I choose, I could break it. Such conditions coddle my need for security, balance my moods, while enforcing my emotions. If such an outburst could cause me to break my electric friend, I would certainly have to come to terms with a concrete consequence of those actions. I would be able to distinguish clearly between internal and external activities. I would become a better human.

I have always wanted to build a living robot to make better the evil things my species does to each other and to Nature. It is a way to contribute to a positive means, making up for the failures in my life, and ultimately it is my way of apologizing for us to an unknown future viewer of my electric friend. Artificiality is the path to redemption, and I will, with the entire fiber of my being, see it to its natural conclusion, because there very much is one, regardless what others might find contrary.